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CHRISTMAS STORIES AND POEMS

FOR THE LITTLE ONES

CHRISTMAS

STORIES AND POEMS

FOR

THE LITTLE ONES

MOTHER'S STORY OF CHRISTMAS.

CHRISTMAS

STORIES AND POEMS

FOR

THE LITTLE ONES

BY

C. EMMA CHENEY, SYDNEY DAYRE,
MISS V. STUART MOSBY,
AND OTHERS

Illustrated

PHILADELPHIA
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY
1889

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GEORGE T. ANDREW.

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MOTHER'S STORY OF CHRISTMAS.

BLOW, winds of the winter, o'er valley and hill-top,
  Oh, never at all care we;
Mother is telling a beautiful story,
  As we gather so close to her knee.
And the firelight falls on the baby's face
With a soft, weird beauty and magic grace.

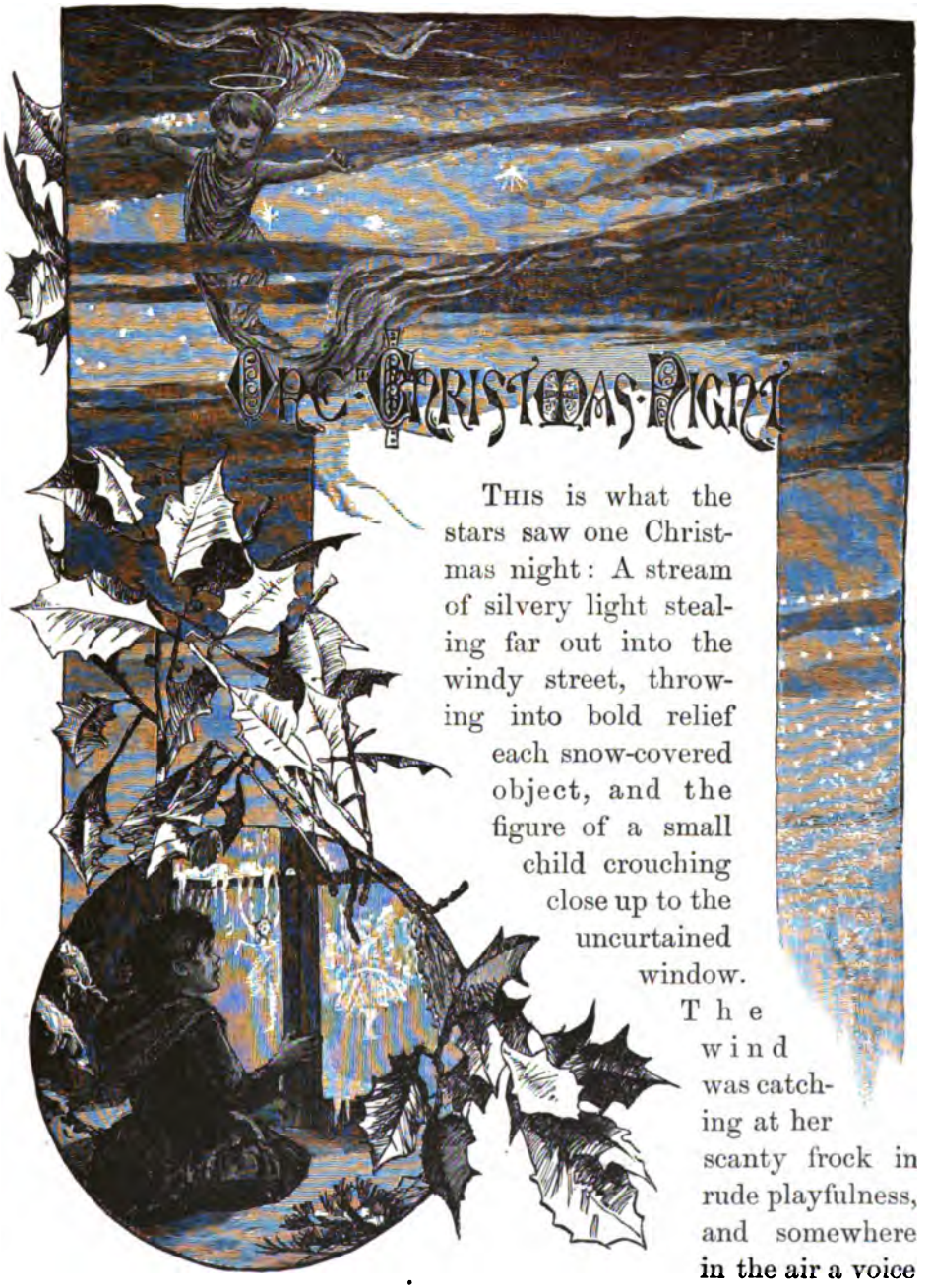
For just such a baby as this of ours,
  With eyes of violet and hair of gold,
Was born in a stable one winter's night,
  In the wonderful days of old.
Oh, listen! that dear little blue-eyed thing,
Of lords was the Lord, and of kings the King.

Mother says that a bright star, far from the East,
Guided three men who were wise and true,
And she says they knelt on the stable floor,
And looked deep down in the eyes of blue,
That they smiled and prayed, while the tears fell slow,
For He was their Lord and their King, you know.

And the shepherds, guarding their flocks on the hill,
Saw the wings of angels glancing bright,
And they fell on their faces, while hymns of peace
Rang out through the Christmas night.
And the lingering light's soft radiancy
Was a wonderful, glorious thing to see.

Mother says she thinks all the babies know
That Jesus once was a baby too;
That the angels whisper it in their dreams, —
The sweet, sweet story, forever new;
And she calls us to gaze on the dimples deep,
As the baby smiles sweetly in his sleep.

KATHARINE HULL.



One Christmas Night

This is what the stars saw one Christmas night: A stream of silvery light stealing far out into the windy street, throwing into bold relief each snow-covered object, and the figure of a small child crouching close up to the uncurtained window. The wind was catching at her scanty frock in rude playfulness, and somewhere in the air a voice sang pityingly, "A child of the people."

And this is what Christine saw: Around a beautiful green

tree, lighted by a hundred tiny lamps, a band of laughing fairies, dancing to the sound of glad, delicious music.

The cold, little face was pressed against the shining glass, and the blue eyes grew wide and wistful. The frolicsome wind threw back the scarlet hood and tossed the yellow ringlets wildly about.

One of the fairies turned a joyous face towards the window. Christine started. Surely it was Gertrude, the little girl who gave her the great piece of golden cake. Was the Christ-child pleased, she wondered, and is that why he sent her those lovely, spangled wings?

Oh, how happy the fairies were! The white, gauzy dresses, covered with stars of silver and gold, sparkled, and gleamed, and flashed in the colored light of the tiny lamps. One fairy stood up on a great, high table, spread her wings and fluttered down. One flew into a beautiful lady's lap, and the lady clasped her in her arms and kissed her.

Sleigh-bells jingled along the streets, and the fairies, hearing them, laughed and screamed and fell to giving good-bys at a wonderful rate. Then the stars saw another stream of silvery light, and little Christine drew back and shut her eyes, the fairies were so near.

The sleigh-bells tingled, and jingled, and grew faint, and died away. The stars looked down on Christine, and Christine looked up at the stars.

"Oh, Christ-child," she murmured, "I gave my bread-and-butter to Fritz."

Would he give her a pair of wings? She was growing very, very sleepy.

"Christ-child," she called again, loudly, "I gave my bread-and-butter to Fritz."

Listen! A flutter of wings. O stars, what did you see there?

"I hear you, little Christine," said a voice sweeter than the sweetest music; "you will never be cold and hungry again."

And the Christ-child fastened a pair of spangled wings upon her shoulders, and together they flew up to the smiling stars.

KATHARINE HULL.

FROM THE CHRISTMAS-TREE.

A LETTER FROM A CHRISTMAS TURKEY.

DEAR LITTLE ONES, —

A VERY suspicious-looking man came into the barn-yard the other day. He looked all around among my brothers and cousins. Then he pointed at me and said I was a nice, big fellow. This made me feel very proud.

When he put his hand into his pocket I supposed he was going to give me some corn. Instead of that he counted out money to my master. Then I knew he would take me away, and I began gobbling good-by to my relatives and friends of the barn-yard.

Now I am alone in the little pen he brought me to. I have been thinking of all this fuss over me, and having so many good things to eat must mean something. I gobbled to some other fowls running about in a yard, and found out from them that it was almost Christmas-time.

Now let me ease your tender little hearts about my career being so suddenly cut short. I want to tell you that in Turkeydom it is considered a great glory to be the centre of attraction at a Christmas dinner-table, — to be dressed up in a nice brown coat, — to be surrounded by sparkling jellies, rich cranberry sauce, and all the other good things; to hear the children cry, "Oh! Oh!" and the papas

and mammas say, "What a fine turkey!" This is what we live for, my little dears. So, when I have gobbled my last gobble, don't be sorry for

Yours, when fat,

TURKEY GOBBLER.

THE CHRISTMAS DINNER-BELL.

Now listen for the Christmas bells that ring out, loud and clear,
A welcome for the holidays, the best of all the year.
From the smallest to the greatest they add their cheery song
To swell the living chorus which gayly floats along.
Oh, the merry Christmas bells!
Oh, the cheery Christmas bells!
There's nothing like the music of the merry Christmas bells.

There's a tiny little tinkle when the moon is shining bright,
When Santa Claus comes travelling with his reindeers prancing light,
And they ring a hearty promise of the treasures to be found
When the breakfast-bell shall waken happy youngsters,—blessed sound!
Oh, the merry midnight bell!
Oh, the early morning bell!
When the children rub their sleepy eyes and hurry down pell-mell.

But a bell is ringing later, and the echo of its noise
Is the jolliest in all the world to merry girls and boys.
Does any music ever heard such wondrous visions bring
Of everything delightful, as that jingle, jingle, jing?
If you listen you will hear
All its promise of good cheer,
As it adds its clang of greeting to this crowning of the year.
How it laughs amid its din,
As it rings the people in!
How the children wait and wonder, all impatient to begin!
And their bonny eyes are bright
At the gay and goodly sight
Of the dainties and the dainties and the sparkle and the light.
Oh, of all the bells the bell
With a tale of joy to tell!
Oh, the jolly, jolly jingle of the Christmas dinner-bell!

SYDNEY DAYRE.

THE CHRISTMAS DINNER-BELL.

SANTA CLAUS DOES NOT FORGET.

BERTIE was a very good boy. He was kind, obedient, truthful, and unselfish. He had, however, one great fault, — he always forgot.

No matter how important the errand, his answer always was "I forgot." When he was sent with a note to the dress-maker his mother would find the note in his pocket at night. If he was sent to the store in a great hurry, to get something for tea, he would return late, without the article, but with his usual answer.

His father and mother talked the matter over, and decided that something must be done to make the little boy remember.

Christmas was near, and Bertie was busy making out a list of things which Santa Claus was to bring him.

"Santa Claus may forget some of those things," said his mother.

"He cannot," replied Bertie; "for I shall write sled, and

skates, and drum, and violin, and all the things on this paper. Then when Santa Claus goes to my stocking he will find the list. He can see it and put the things in as fast as he reads."

Christmas morning came, and Bertie was up at dawn to see what was in his stocking. His mother kept away from him as long as she could, for she knew what Santa Claus had done.

Finally she heard him coming with slow steps to her room. Slowly he opened the door and came towards her. He held in his hand a list very much longer than the one he had made out. He put it in his mother's hand, while tears of disappointment fell from his eyes.

"See what Santa Claus left for me; but I think he might have given me one thing besides."

His mother opened the roll. It was a list of all the errands Bertie had been asked to do for six months. At the end of all was written, in staring capitals, "I FORGOT."

Bertie wept for an hour. Then his mother told him they were all going to grandpa's. For the first time he would see a Christmas-tree. Perhaps something might be growing there for him.

It was very strange to Bertie, but on grandpa's tree he found everything he had written on his list. Was he cured of his bad habit? Not all at once; but when his mother saw that he was particularly heedless she would say, "Remember, Santa Claus does not forget."

M. A. HALEY.

THE CHRISTMAS CAROL OF THE BIRDS.

Do you know, when we are having such good times at Christmas, what sweet music they have in Norway, that cold country across

the sea? One day in the year the simple peasants who live there make the birds very happy, so that they sing, of their own free will, a glad, joyous carol on Christmas morning.

And this is why they sing on that morning more than on any other. After the birds have found shelter from the north wind

on Christmas-eve, and the night is still and bright with stars, or even if the storm be ever so severe, the good people bring out sheaves of corn and wheat from their storehouses. Tying them on slender poles, they raise them from every spire, barn, gate-post, and gable; then, when the Christmas sun rises over the hills, every spire and gable bursts forth into joyous song

You can well believe that these songs of the birds make the people of Norway very happy. They echo, with all their hearts, their living, grateful anthem, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will to men!"

MRS. G. HALL.

A TURKEY FOR ONE.

LURA'S Uncle Roy is in Japan. He used to take Christmas dinner at Lura's home. Now he could only write her papa to say a box of gifts had been sent, and one was for his little girl.

The little girl clapped her hands, crying, "Oh, mamma! don't you think it is the chain and locket dear uncle said he would sometime give me?"

"No," replied her papa, reading on. "Your uncle says it is a turkey for one."

"But we do not need turkeys from Japan," remarked the little daughter, soberly.

Her papa smiled, and handed the open letter to her mamma.

"Read it aloud, every bit," begged Lura, seeing her mamma was smiling, too.

But her mamma folded the letter and said nothing.

On Christmas-eve the box, which had just arrived, was opened, and every one in the house was made glad with a present. Lura's was a papier-maché turkey, nearly as large as the one brought home at the same time by the market-boy.

Next morning, while the fowl in the kitchen was being roasted, Lura placed hers before a window and watched people admire it as they passed. All its imitation feathers, and even more its red wattles, seemed to wish every man and woman, boy and girl, a Merry Christmas.

Lura had not spoken of the jewelry since her uncle's letter was read. It is not nice for one who receives a gift to wish it was different. Lura was not that kind of a child.

When dinner was nearly over, her papa said to her, "My dear,

you have had as much of my turkey as you wanted; if you please, I will now try some of yours."

"Mine is what Uncle Roy calls a turkey for one," laughed Lura. She turned in her chair towards where her bird had been strutting on the window-sill, and added, in surprise, "Why, what has become of him?"

At that moment the servant brought in a huge platter. When room had been made for it on the table it was set down in front of Lura's papa, and on the dish was her turkey.

"Oh, what fun!" gayly exclaimed the child. "Did uncle tell you to pretend to serve it?"

"I have not finished what he directs me to do," her papa said, with a flourish of the carving-knife.

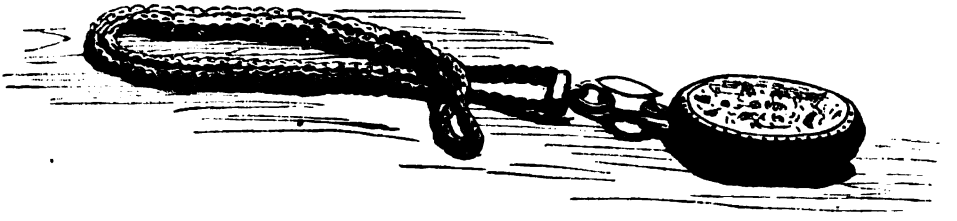
"But, papa — oh, please!" Her hand was on his arm. "You would not spoil my beautiful bird from Japan!"

A hidden spring was touched with the point of the knife. The

breast opened, and disclosed the fowl filled with choice toys and other things. The first taken out was a tiny box; inside was a gold chain and locket; the locket held Uncle Roy's picture.

It was a turkey for one, — for only Uncle Roy's niece. But all the family shared the amusement.

LAVINIA S. GOODWIN.



LITTLE CHRISTMAS CAROLLERS.

We are a band of carollers,
  We march through frost and snow,
But care not for the weather
  As on our way we go.

At every hall or cottage
  That stands upon our way,
We stop to give the people
  Best wishes for the day.

We pray a merry Christmas,
  Made bright by Christmas cheer,
With peace, and hope, and gladness,
  And all they may hold dear.

And for all those that happen
  To pass us on our way
We have a smile, and wish them
  A merry Christmas-day.

L. A. FRANCE.

LITTLE CHRISTMAS CAROLLERS.

ROUND THE CHRISTMAS-TREE.

THE Christmas bells in many a clime
Their joyous peals are ringing,
And sweet in cot and palace chime
The children's voices singing.
While here we see the Christmas-tree
Its gay fruit bending o'er us,
We, glad of heart, will bear our part,
And swell the Christmas chorus.

We bless His birth, who came to earth
And in His cradle lowly
Received the earliest Christmas gifts, —
The Christ-child, pure and holy.
To Him we raise our thanks and praise
For all the love He bore us;
For His dear sake our hymn we make,
And swell the Christmas chorus.

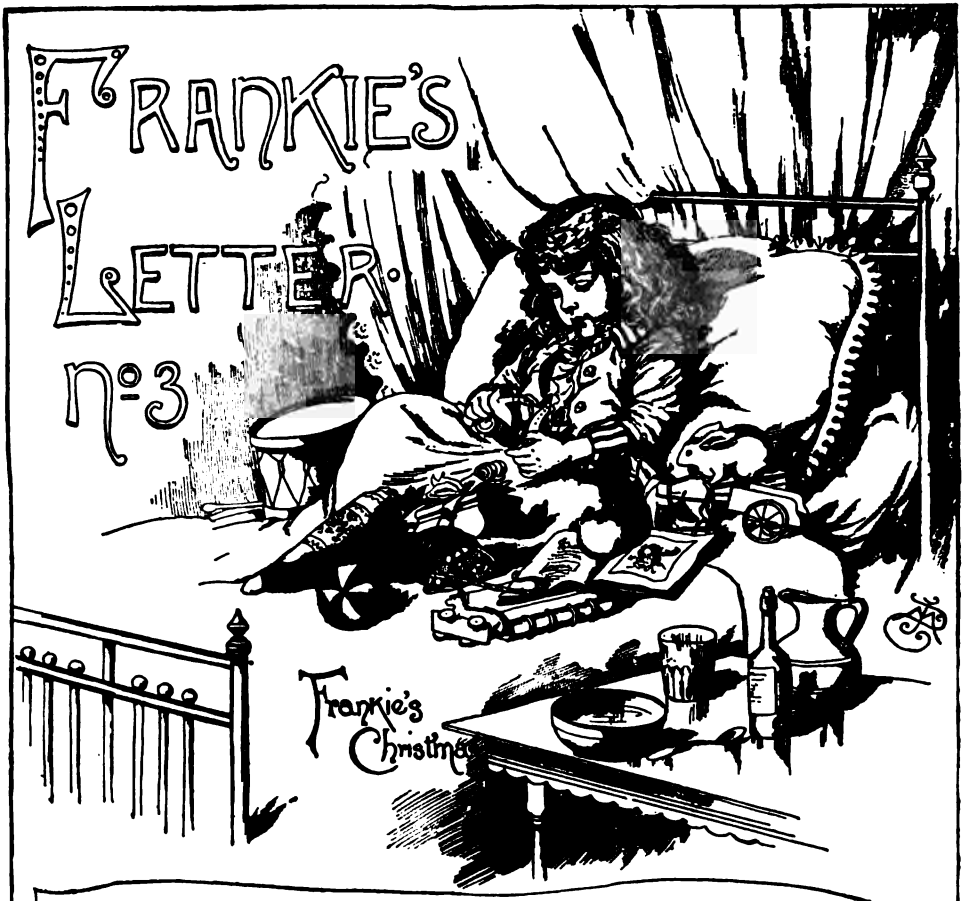
And while we strip these laden boughs
Of all their shining treasure,
He from above will look with love
Upon our harmless pleasure.
He gave our friends, our joys He sends.
He ever watches o'er us;
He bends His ear our song to hear,
And loves our Christmas chorus.

Still, "Peace on earth, good-will to men,"
The heavenly choirs are singing;
And "Peace on earth, good-will to men,"
Through earth to-night is ringing.
We catch the strain with sweet refrain
That angels sung before us,
And join the song with heart and tongue,
The holy Christmas chorus.

E. F. F.

ROUND THE CHRISTMAS-TREE.

Frankie's Letter. No 3



WASHINGTON JANUARY 1888

DEAR LITTLE ONES I HOPE YOU HAD A MERRY CHRISTMAS. DID YOU ALL HANG UP YOUR STOCKINGS? I FOUND MINE JUST FULL OF CANDY UP TO THE TOP. ANNIE WONT LET ME HAVE BUT THREE LITTLE PIECES A DAY SO I HAVE SOME OF THAT CANDY STILL LEFT. SANTA CLAUS BROUGHT ME A LOT OF OTHER THINGS TOO. I HAD A SORE THROAT ON CHRISTMAS DAY AND I HAD TO STAY IN BED ALL DAY I COULD NOT GO TO PETS CHRISTMAS TREE AND THAT MADE ME FEEL BAD. PET SENT ME A GREAT BIG ORANGE AND A BOX OF CANDY AND A PAIR OF ROLLER SKATES. I LIKED THE ROLLER SKATES BEST. THEY ARE TOO BIG FOR ME NOW SO I CANT USE THEM TILL I AM BIGGER MYSELF. I SENT PET A BOX OF LEAD SOLDIERS AND A POUND OF ANIMAL CRACKERS. MY MAMMA DIDN'T THINK PET WOULD CARE FOR MY PRESENTS BUT I KNEW SHE WOULD. SHE TOLD ME BEFORE CHRISTMAS JUST WHAT SHE WANTED MOST. MOST ALL THE SOLDIERS ARE BROKEN NOW. PET GOT A GREAT BIG DOLL. SHE SAYS ITS NAME IS BELLE PARIS AFTER THE PLACE IT CAME FROM. I HAVE MADE A PICTURE OF BELLE IN THE CORNER OF THIS PAPER. IT LOOKS A GOOD DEAL LIKE HER ONLY HER HAIR IS REALLY YELLOW AND HER DRESS IS BLUE. I COULDN'T MAKE THOSE RIGHT. MY THROAT IS ALL WELL NOW AND I DONT HAVE TO TAKE ANY MORE MEDICINE. THIS IS A CHRISTMAS LETTER AND THAT IS THE REASON IT IS SO LONG. I MUST STOP NOW. YOUR FRIEND,

FRANKIE.

A RAGGED CHRISTMAS FEAST.

On Christmas-day there is a great feast in Dublin. This, you know, is the chief city of Ireland. The feast is made for the

children. There are in that city a great many little ones who are very, very poor. There are kind people there also, who look after these poor children. They have what they call "ragged schools,"

where many of them are taught to read, and to sew, and other useful things.

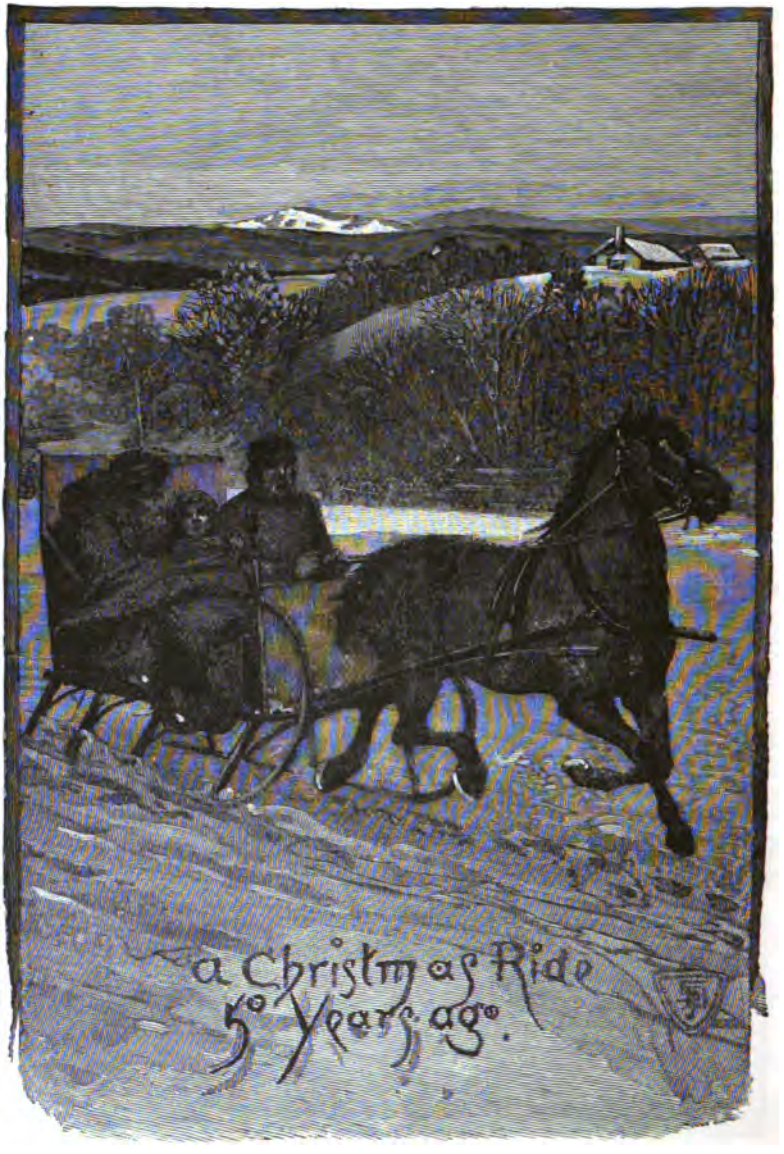
Dr. Nelaton is a famous minister in Dublin, and every year he, with other good people, gets up this great feast for the children. About eight hundred of them came last year. Some of these were only half clad, and all were very ragged. They were seated at long, narrow tables, which were covered with a white cloth. The children from the ragged schools wore aprons, in bright colors, to hide their rags. Each school had a color of its own. These aprons were only lent them for the day, and the children felt very fine in them. But there were two long rows without any aprons. These were little ones who had been picked up along the streets. Each ragged scholar had permission to bring all the children he could find. And oh, how ragged and dirty these two rows were!

But they brightened up, just like the children with aprons, when they saw the feast. A huge mug of steaming tea and an immense bun to each child! Rarely did they have such a treat as this. And how they did eat! Each child had all he wanted. It would have

done you good to see their poor, pinched faces beam with delight. During the meal a large throng of orphan children in the gallery

sung some sweet songs. Then after the feast there were small gifts, and little speeches and prayers, and more songs. The little ragged ones seemed like new beings, in this atmosphere of love. Such a glad day as that Christmas was a rare event in their sad lives. Children who live in happy homes know little about the sufferings of the poor. Perhaps if they knew more, such little ones would try harder, by gifts and kind acts, to carry sunshine to sorrowful hearts.

C. BELL.



GRANDPA and Grandma Linn were going to spend Christmas at their son's house. It was a long ride, the snow was deep and the air sharp and crisp.

They travelled in a sleigh. The best road was on the river; it

was frozen solid. They could go the whole thirty miles on the beautiful snow-track.

Sitting between grandpa and grandma was little Bessie West; she was going to see her cousins Jack and Sue.

Grandpa Linn had a fur cap and mittens, and all that anybody could see of Grandma Linn was a quilted hood and a green veil.

Bessie was tucked away almost out of sight, to keep her warm. Over the white lace cap she wore in summer she had a blue woollen hood; over her cloak was her mother's best shawl, and her mittens and leggings had been knit for this very journey.

Besides, they had warm fur robes, a foot-stove, and hot bricks. In one corner of the sleigh was a basket of presents, — apples, nuts, and pretty things that the aunties had made. There was a lunch-basket; they often wanted a bite, especially Bessie.

In her lap Bessie held a cunning little kitty, rolled up in a baby-blanket. A small red cap covered its head and ears. You could see nothing but its eyes; it was to be a Christmas present to little Sue. Once in a while Bessie and kitty had little naps.

A great many other sleighs and big sleds were also on the river. The latter were laden with lumber or ice. They all had four horses, and each horse had bells around his neck.

At five o'clock their journey was over. How glad they were to sit down to supper, and warm themselves by the bright, blazing fire! How the wood crackled and snapped! and what beautiful talks they all had!

This was a Christmas journey fifty years ago, in Maine.

F. P. CHAPLIN.

A CHRISTMAS HYMN.

Gracious and heavenly star,
Which shines on us afar,
Still, wheresoe'er we are,
  Watch o'er His fold.

Calm was that holy flight
Through the far lonely night,
When first your radiant light
  Spoke of His birth.

In the still midnight air,
Silent you sparkle there,
Hovering with loving care
  Over the spot.

Hark! from the cloudless blue,
Sweet music stealing through,
Angels the song renew,
  "Glory to God!"

Hail, blessed Christmas morn,
When Christ, a child, was born,
Let us the strain prolong
  For evermore!

FANNIE M. HALL.

Hail, blessed Christmas morn,
When Christ, a child, was born.

A CHRISTMAS SURPRISE.

THE night before Christmas, Ned and Mamie hung up their stockings. Ned's was red, and Mamie's was blue. Ned's was the larger, because he was two years the older; but Mamie said Santa Claus could put some of her presents under her stocking.

They woke up very early on Christmas morning. They ran downstairs, and there hung their stockings, so full that they were running over. Right under the stockings lay a large package, done up in paper and tied with a string. It was larger than Ned. They could not think what it could be. Mamma said they would have to open it and find out.

They thought they would see what was in their stockings first, but before they got half-way down to the foot they concluded they could not wait, but must open the package right off.

Papa gave them his knife. Ned cut the string. Then Mamie began to pull open the wrapper. There were several papers, for the package was very long. Finally they got to the last one. Then what a shout there was! for there lay Cousin Jack. He was red in the face, from being covered up so, and trying to keep from laughing.

How they did laugh, and what a merry time they had! Jack had come the night before, after they had gone to bed. It was mamma who thought of making a Christmas surprise out of him. She did not wrap him up until just before Ned and Mamie got down, and papa had watched to see that they did not get in until all was ready.

L. A. FRANCE.

Sing "Heigh-ho, my children, dear,
Sing heigh-ho the holly!"
We will say good-by to the old, old year,
And greet the new with a shout of cheer,
Singing "Heigh-ho the holly, the holly,
Here's to the green holly!"

With holly sprigs the pudding crown,
Sing "Heigh-ho the holly!"
Roast the big turkey, so juicy and brown,
And load the table with dainties down,
Singing "Heigh-ho the holly, the holly,
Here's to the green holly!"

Oh, high hang the mistletoe,
Sing "Heigh-ho the holly!"
With evergreen leaves and berries like snow
Under it let the true lovers go,—
Singing "Heigh-ho the holly, the holly,
"Here's to the green holly!"

Pile the blazing yule-logs higher,
Sing "Heigh-ho the holly!"
Dance shadow-dances before the fire,
Dance, little maidens, and never tire,
Singing "Heigh-ho the holly, the holly,
"Here's to the green holly!"

HEIGH-HO THE HOLLY!

SANTA CLAUS AT SEA.

A LETTER FROM HIM.

CHRISTMAS EVENING.

MY DEAR CARL, — I love you so much that I must write you a few words, though I really hardly have time. My reindeer team are pawing with their little hoofs, and the wind is so high that I'm afraid half my toys will be blown away; and then what will the children say?

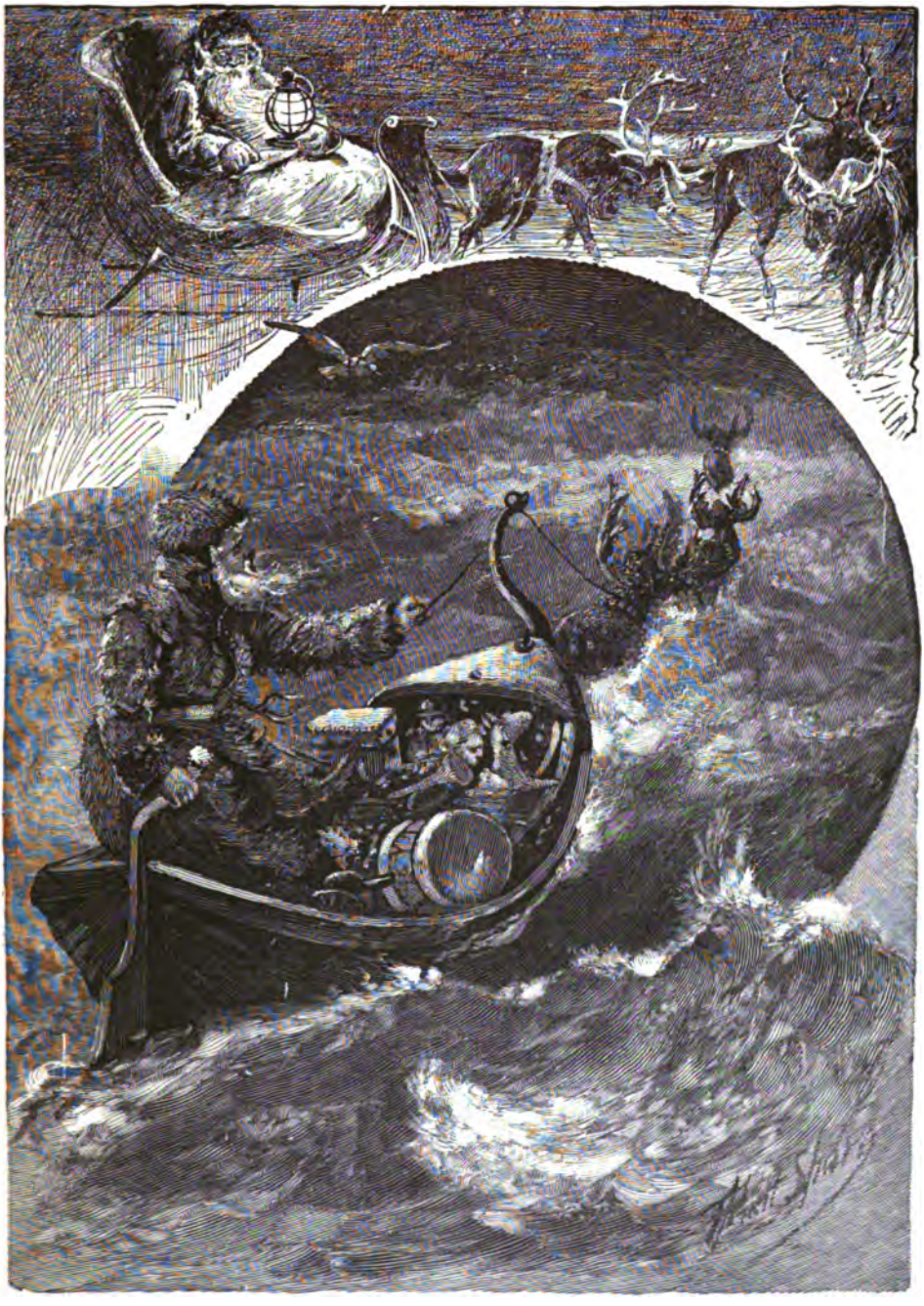
I filled the stockings that were hung up in Boston first, and then I came very fast overland, filling all the stockings as I came along. After San Francisco was well supplied, I had to cross the Pacific Ocean, to get to you in Honolulu. I had been riding in a sleigh; but now I harnessed my reindeer to a little boat, and they swam over here very fast. When we were nearly here, we passed a big steamer, and I went close to it to see who was there. I found one gentleman who was thinking of his little boys and loving them very much and longing to get home to them. I saw, peeping out of his coat-pocket, two little cannon; and just then I heard him say, "I wonder if I shall get home to Ernest and Carl and Kenneth and Baby on Christmas-day!" I was just about to shout out, "Oh, I know your boys, and I'll tell them you are coming!" when my reindeer began to swim very fast indeed, and, before I knew it, I was out of sight of the steamer. When your papa comes, ask him if he saw a funny little man sailing away very fast.

I think, my Carl, that you are a dear boy, but I don't like that habit you have of crying when you are playing. Boys who play hard ought to expect to get hurt sometimes, and you must try to see how much you can bear without crying.

Good-by, dear.

Your loving friend,

SANTA CLAUS.



SANTA CLAUS AT SEA.

Christmas Carol.

Words by JAMES THOMSON. Music by T. CRAMPTON.

Andante moderato.
mf
Voice
and
Piano.
p Legato.
1. Let us now our voices raise,
2. Thus his in - fant life be - gan,
f
In a joyful song of praise, Sing to hail the happy morn when the Saviour
Thus God's Son became a man; Humble was His lot be - low, To re - deem us
p
Christ was born. In a low - ly, hum - ble shed Was his man - ger cra - dle bed;
all from woe. When we deck each home this day With the hol - ly and the bay,
mf
There with oxen of the stall Lay the in - fant Lord of all.
Let us think where Christ was laid In a low - ly man - ger bed.

SUSY'S CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

"TELL us a story, nursie; please do," begged two little golden-haired girls, as they snuggled on the soft rug before the fire. "Did you ever have just what you wished for at Christmas, when you were a little girl?"

"Yes, I did once. I was the oldest, and had two brothers and three little sisters. We did not have a beautiful home like this. We lived in a little cottage. It was pretty, though, in the summer-time, when the roses and pinks were in bloom. My father was dead, and mother worked for the rich people around the village. There was plenty to do about holiday times.

"It was the day before Christmas. Mother was at the house of a very rich and kind lady. She was going to have a grand party in the evening.

"Mother told me, when she went away, to mind the children, and perhaps I might have a nice Christmas present. I knew we should have plenty of candy and cake, and other nice things, from Mrs. Reid's. We often had pretty clothes, too, that Mamie and Robbie Reid had outgrown.

"I had been wishing for a muff; but I knew mother could not afford to buy one. It was hard enough even to get shoes for us all. I thought I should have to be satisfied with mittens.

"It was quite dark, and we all sat around the fire. I had rocked Tilly to sleep, and put her to bed. Willie and Joe were playing

cat's-cradle. The rest of us were making believe we were rich, and could have all we wanted for Christmas.

"All at once there was a heavy step on the porch, and a knock at the door. I opened it with Margie and Amy clinging to my dress. A boy shoved a big box into the room, and

shouted, 'A Merry Christmas to you!' He then ran out at the gate.

"The box had all our names on the cover, and the children were wild to see what was inside.

"'Wait till mother comes,' I said, and pretty soon we heard her at the gate. She seemed surprised, and said Santa Claus had remembered us early.

"Mother advised us to go to bed and wait until morning to see our presents. It was pretty hard; but we had some oranges and candy, and I put the boys to bed. Margie and I wondered and guessed what was in the box; but at last we fell asleep.

"You may be sure we were up early in the morning. There were dolls and toys for the little ones, with hoods and mittens, and for me a lovely squirrel muff, lined with blue, with a soft little boa for my neck. I was a happy girl that Christmas, I can tell you.

"And now, my dears, you must go to bed, or Santa Claus will not be able to find your stockings."

"Oh, I hope I shall have what I want to-morrow!" said Gracie.

"And I, too," echoed Helen. "And your story was very nice, nursie."

"Good-night, and call us early in the morning."

MRS. A. D. BELL.

AN OLD ENGLISH GAME.

HUNDREDS of years ago, even before any people but Indians lived in America, the children used to play games, just as they do now. In England they had plays for the little ones at Christmas, Michaelmas, and other holidays. The young folks had "good times," just as they do now, though not always in the same way.

Oliver Goldsmith wrote a great many poems, histories, and stories, which are read now. One of them was the story called "The Vicar of Wakefield," which the little ones ought to read when they grow up. On Michaelmas-eve the vicar's family played "Blindman's Buff," "Hunt the Slipper," "Hot Cockles," and, very likely, "Snapdragon," for this last game was used on all such occasions.

The picture of Snapdragon, on another page, will almost explain itself. A quantity of brandy is put in a shallow dish on the table. Then they set the brandy on fire, for the alcohol in it will burn. From the pan will rise a bluish blaze, into which some one drops raisins, almonds, or sweetmeats. The game is to pick out the raisins, or other eatables, and put them into the mouth. It is quite exciting, and the little ones scream and laugh with delight. Of course they do not burn their fingers very badly, or they would not laugh.

You may learn from the picture how people dressed in England one or two hundred years ago. Perhaps you will be glad that you do not have to wear such great, stiff collars as the children who are playing the game. In those days the men did not wear trousers, as they do now, but "tights" and "trunks," like the man-servant who is bringing in the refreshments.

Papa and mamma in these times will not think that "Snapdragon" is a very pretty game, for they all teach the little ones not to play with fire. It is not a safe game, and it is just as well that it is not used now in our homes.

UNCLE FORRESTER.

SNAPDRAGON.

A CHRISTMAS HYMN.

On the marble steps of a mansion
  The crimson-stained gas-light fell.
Through the half-opened door, on the perfumed air,
  Came the music's tremulous swell,
While a childish voice sang, sweet and low,
The words of a hymn of long ago.

All within was the glitter of riches,
  The gleam of soft velvet and gold;
But without crouched a form on the door-steps,
  Clad in tatters, and shiv'ring with cold;
And the beggar-child sank down in the snow,
As she heard the sweet story of long ago.

And the words of the song kept saying
  "Let the little ones come unto me."
So the ragged figure crept in through the door,
  To see what the meaning might be.
And the child of wealth and the child of woe
Sang together the song of the long ago.

When the song was hushed, the singer
  Caught sight of the shivering form,
And the tender heart with pity was touched;
  So she bade her come in from the storm,
And kind hands gave her dainties to eat,
  And clad her in clothes soft and warm.
Then together they sang, in tones sweet and low,
The old, old story of long ago.

MISS V. STUART MOSBY.

A CHRISTMAS HYMN.

CHRISTMAS CAROL.

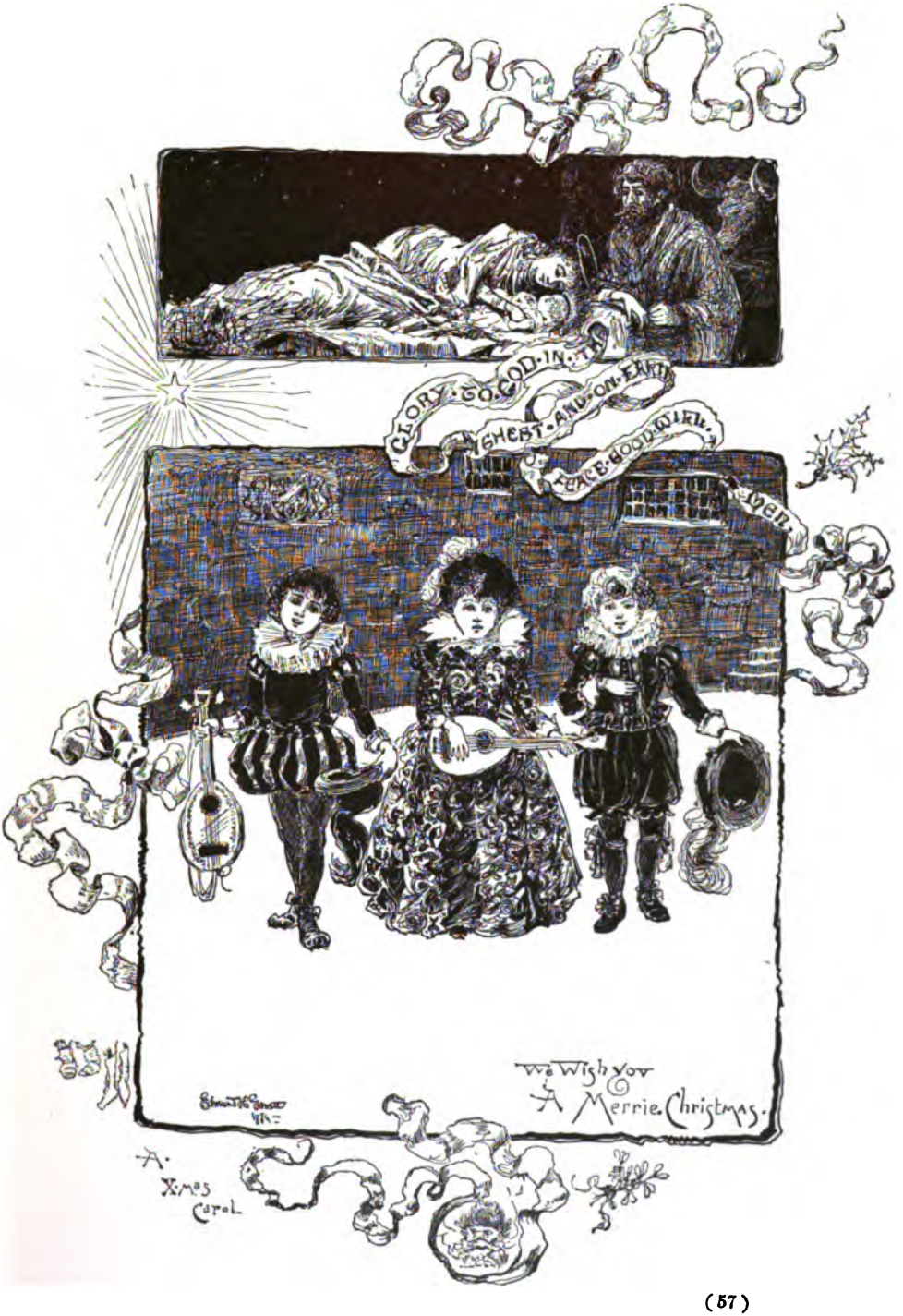
THE children sing a carol clear,
On early Christmas morn,
Because it is the day on which
Our Saviour, Christ, was born.

The wondrous story o'er they tell,
Of the dear Saviour's birth:
Of how the angels came to say
That peace should reign on earth.

Of how the wise men travelled far
The infant Christ to see,
In the poor manger, where He lay
Upon His mother's knee.

And so at break of Christmas-day
They sing their carol sweet;
And ask a Christmas blessing
From every one they meet.

F. H. S.


GLORY · TO · GOD · IN · THE
HIGHEST · AND · ON · EARTH
PEACE · GOOD · WILL
MEN
We Wish You
A Merrie Christmas.
A
Xmas
Carol

A GRAND SURPRISE.

MADGE and Edith and Helen had plenty of dolls to play with. They had a baby-house, a pair of tame rabbits, and a big dog. They rolled hoop, played at keeping store, and made mud-pies. But better than anything else they liked to dress up in their Aunt Kate's dresses and play they were ladies. Aunt Kate did not like to lend her dresses, for they were always dusty when returned to her, and sometimes were torn; and it was a good deal of trouble to put them on the little girls, for of course they did not fit, and the sleeves were too long. But the kind aunt did not know how to refuse the children when they begged so hard.

"Make a train on my dress," Madge would always say; and then Edith and Helen would beg for trains too.

"I wish there were trains to your own dresses," said Aunt Kate; "then perhaps you wouldn't want mine so often."

"And we wish your dresses fitted us," said Madge; "all the waists are too big."

While the little girl was speaking a bright idea came into Aunt Kate's head. Christmas was near at hand, and she had been wondering what she could give the children, for they already had more toys than they needed. Now she knew just what to give them.

She was shut up in her own room nearly all day for two weeks, and kept the door locked. The little girls could not guess what she was doing.

But on Christmas morning they had a grand surprise. Under the stocking of each child lay a big pasteboard box. Madge opened hers first, and found a lovely little dress of blue cashmere, which reached to the floor in front, and had a long train at the back. The waist was a perfect fit, and there was a little bonnet to match. Edith's suit was cardinal, and Helen's was pink; and they had bonnets, too.

They could hardly wait until after breakfast, so anxious were they to dress up in their new clothes.

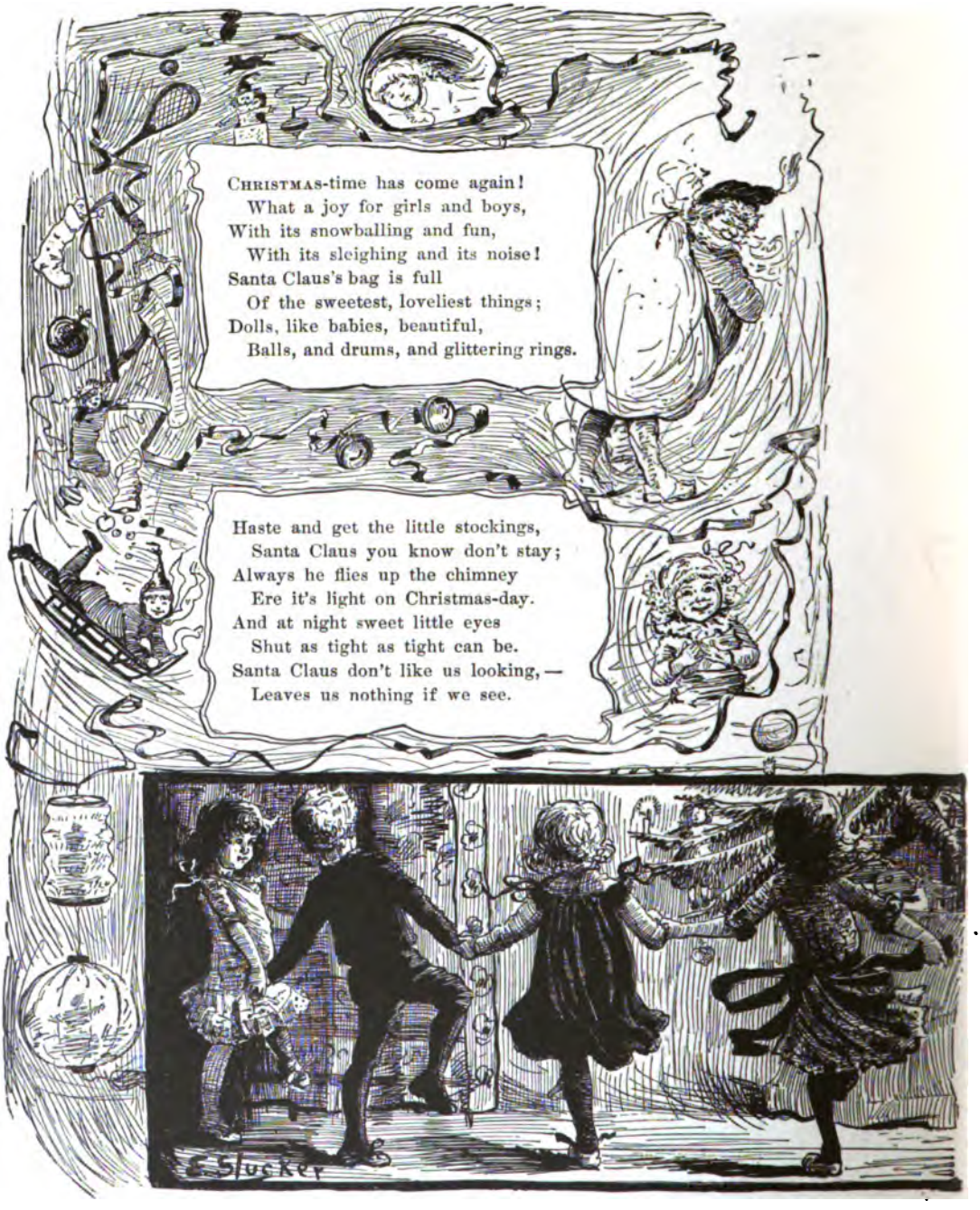
"You couldn't have given us anything we would have liked better, Aunt Kate," said Madge.

And Aunt Kate never again had to lend her dresses.

FLORENCE B. HALLOWELL.

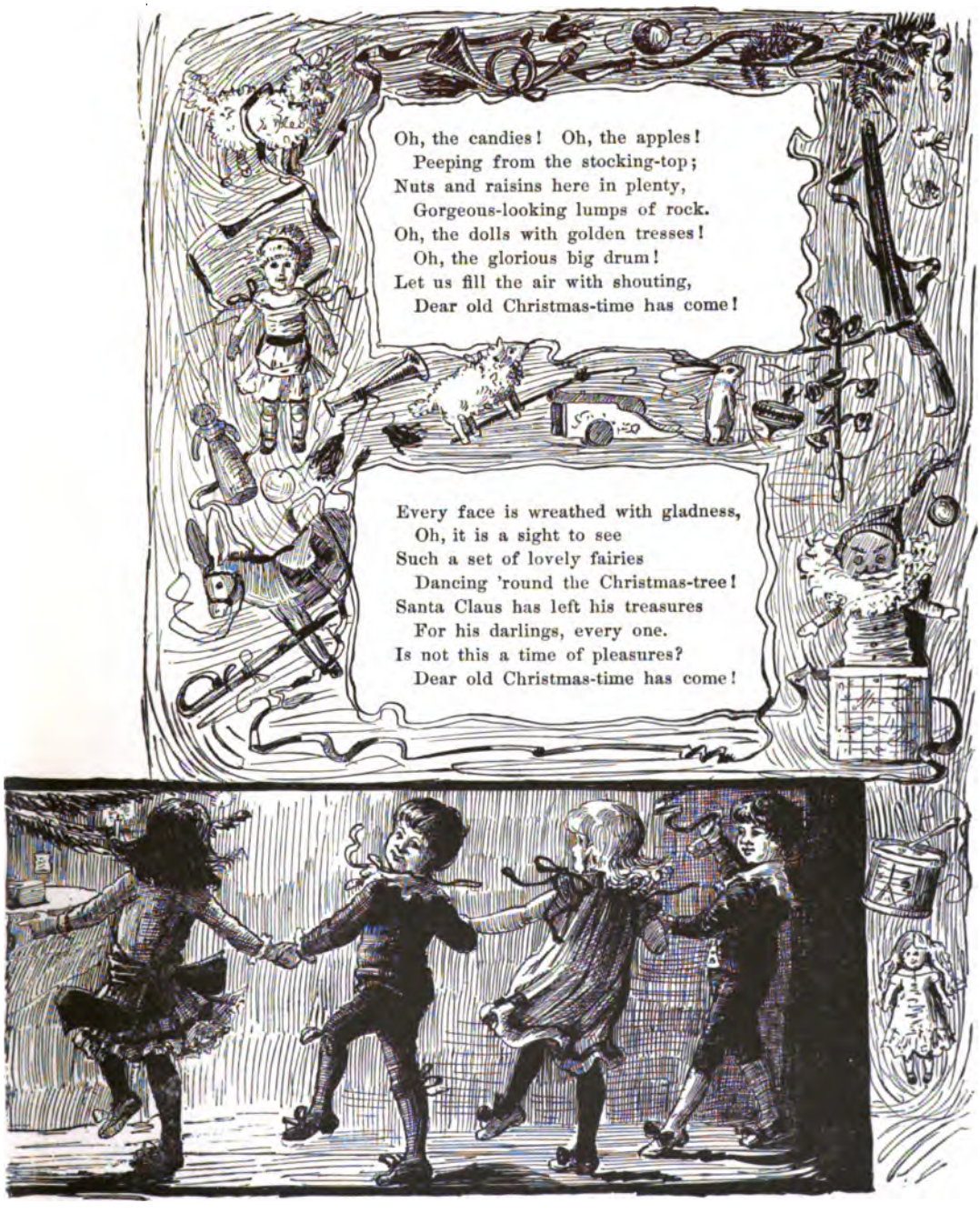
AND PLAY THEY WERE LADIES.

OUR CHRISTMAS–TREE.



CHRISTMAS-time has come again!
What a joy for girls and boys,
With its snowballing and fun,
With its sleighing and its noise!
Santa Claus's bag is full
Of the sweetest, loveliest things;
Dolls, like babies, beautiful,
Balls, and drums, and glittering rings.

Haste and get the little stockings,
Santa Claus you know don't stay;
Always he flies up the chimney
Ere it's light on Christmas-day.
And at night sweet little eyes
Shut as tight as tight can be.
Santa Claus don't like us looking,—
Leaves us nothing if we see.


Oh, the candies! Oh, the apples!
Peeping from the stocking-top;
Nuts and raisins here in plenty,
Gorgeous-looking lumps of rock.
Oh, the dolls with golden tresses!
Oh, the glorious big drum!
Let us fill the air with shouting,
Dear old Christmas-time has come!
Every face is wreathed with gladness,
Oh, it is a sight to see
Such a set of lovely fairies
Dancing 'round the Christmas-tree!
Santa Claus has left his treasures
For his darlings, every one.
Is not this a time of pleasures?
Dear old Christmas-time has come!

OUR CHRISTMAS TREE

How Nan earned Christmas money

Last spring Nan Dale's father gave her a small piece of ground in the garden, to do with as she liked. It was right beside grandma's camomile-bed, so that when Nan worked upon it she had company. Grandma often weeded her bed, and watered it, and picked the fragrant sprays.

Nan planted her ground with pansies and sweet-peas. In due time great purple and yellow and brown blossoms peeped through the green leaves. The peas crept up the trellis Nan placed for them, covered with pale pink flowers.

A lady from the hotel, in her walks, had often noticed the little girl hard at work. One morning she stopped and begged a pansy for her hair, for which she gave Nan a cent.

This gave the child an idea. That very morning she made a little basketful of bouquets, — a pansy, a sweet-pea blossom, and a sprig of southernwood in each. She tied them with odd bits of bright ribbon, and took them down to the hotel. There were a great many ladies and gentlemen there who were ready to give her a cent, and sometimes more, for the fragrant little bunches. And there was not half enough to go around.

How rich Nan felt as she ran home, jingling the pennies in the bottom of her basket!

She made bouquets every morning, as long as the flowers lasted. That was a long time, for it seemed that the more Nan picked off the more there were blossomed. At the end of the season there were

four dollars and fifteen cents in her store. All of it came from the little flower-bed.

What did she do with it?

Well, Nan was a real little helper. For a long time she had wished for money of her very own to buy Christmas gifts. By this effort — not too great for any little girl or boy to make — she had earned it herself.

CHRISTINE STEPHENS.

THE DOLLS' CHRISTMAS PARTY.

It was the week before Christmas, and the dolls in the toy-shop played together all night. The biggest one was from Paris.

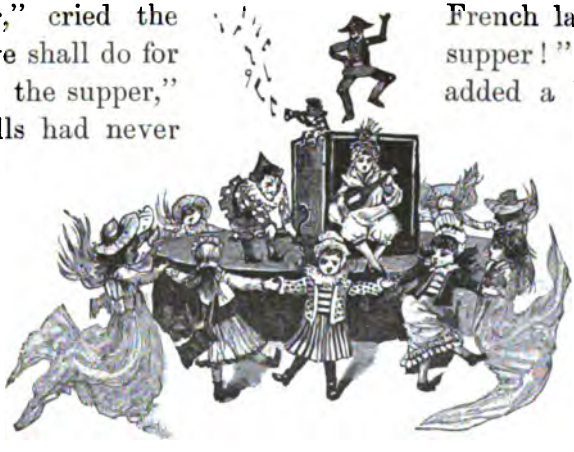
One night she said, "We ought to have a party before Santa Claus carries us away to the little girls. I can dance, and I will show you how."

"I can dance myself if you will pull the string," said a "Jim Crow" doll.

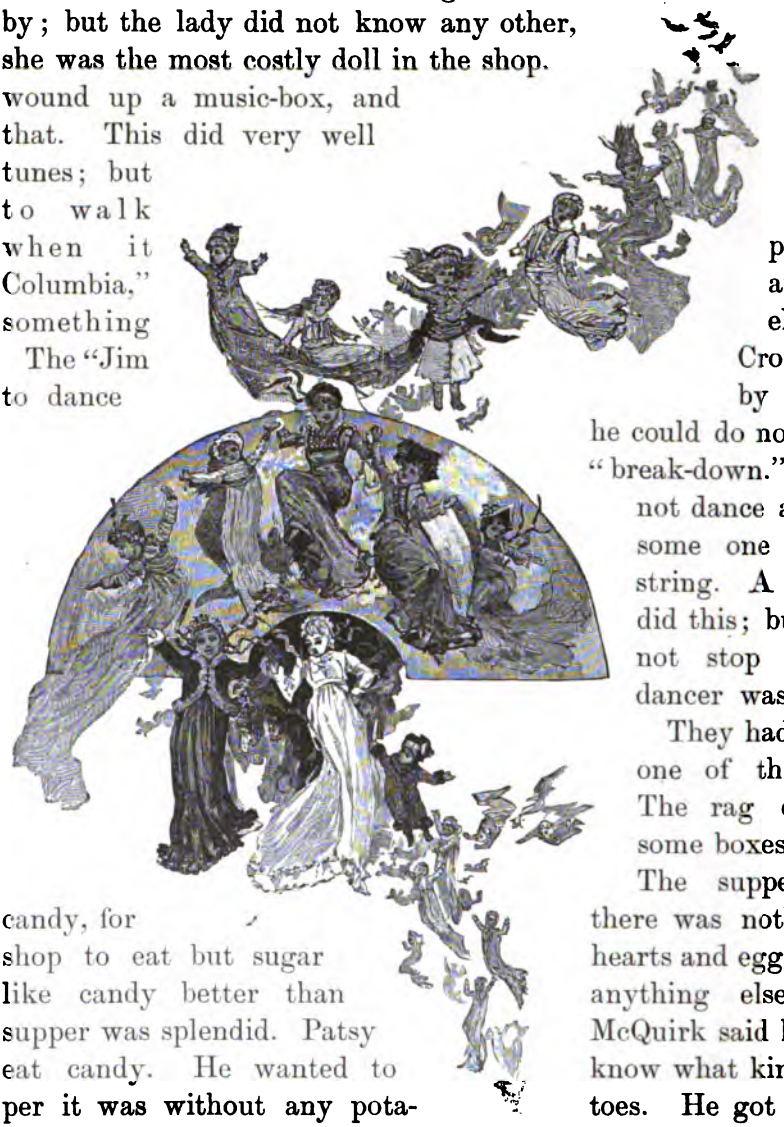
"What shall we have for supper?" piped a little boy-doll in a Jersey suit. He was always thinking about eating.

"Oh, dear," cried the French lady, "I don't know what we shall do for supper!"

"I can get the supper," added a big rag doll. The other dolls had never liked her very well, but they thanked her now. She had taken lessons at a cooking-school, and knew how to make cake and candy. She gave French names to everything she made, and this made it taste better. Old Mother Hubbard was there, and she said the rag doll did not know how to cook anything.

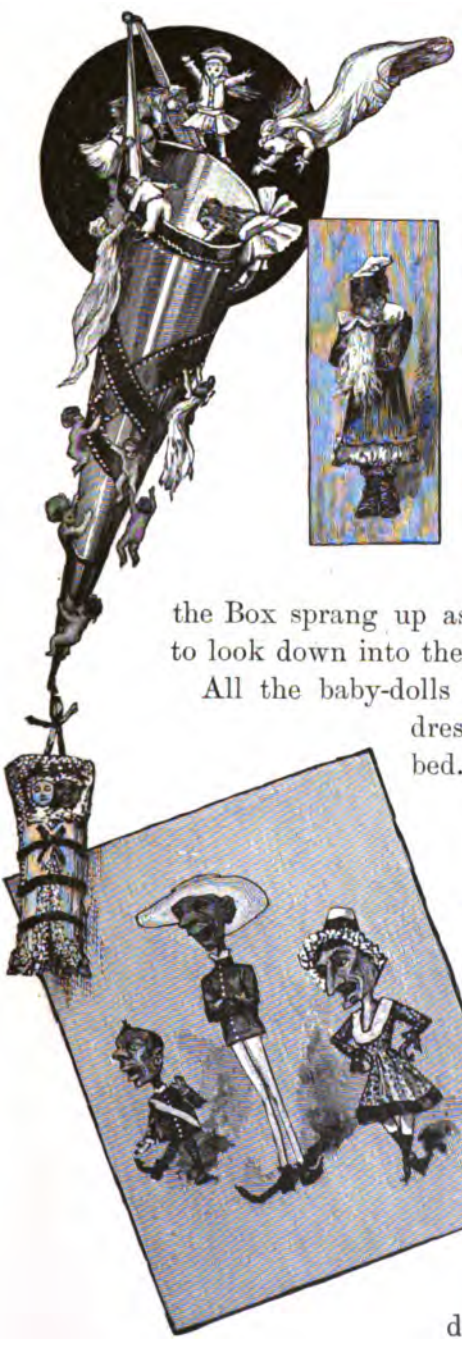


They danced in one of the great shop-windows. They opened a toy piano, and a singing-doll played "Comin' through the Rye." The dolls did not find that a good tune to dance by; but the lady did not know any other, although she was the most costly doll in the shop. Then they wound up a music-box, and danced by that. This did very well for some tunes; but they had to walk around when it played "Hail Columbia," and wait for something else.



The "Crow" doll had to dance by himself, for he could do nothing but a "break-down." He would not dance at all unless some one pulled his string. A toy monkey did this; but he would not stop when the dancer was tired.

They had supper on one of the counters. The rag doll placed some boxes for tables. The supper was of candy, for there was nothing in the shop to eat but sugar hearts and eggs. The dolls like candy better than anything else, and the supper was splendid. Patsy McQuirk said he could not eat candy. He wanted to know what kind of a supper it was without any potatoes. He got very angry, put his hands into his pockets, and smoked his pipe. It was very uncivil for him to do so in company. The smoke made the little ladies sick, and they all tried to climb into a



"horn of plenty" to get out of the way.

Mother Hubbard and the two black waiters tried to sing "I love Little Pussy;" but the tall one in a brigand hat opened his mouth wide, that the small dollies were afraid they might fall into it. The clown raised both arms in wonder, and Jack in the Box sprang up as high as he could to look down into the fellow's throat.

All the baby-dolls in caps and long dresses had been put to bed. They woke up when the others were at supper, and began to cry. The big doll brought them some candy, and that kept them quiet for some time.

The next morning a little girl found the toy piano open. She was sure the dolls had been playing on it. The

grown-up people thought it had been left open the night before; but they do not understand dolls as well as little people do.

VIOLA ROSEBOROUGH.

GRANDMA'S CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

GRANDMA BURNS sat knitting busily in the sun one bright morning the week before Christmas. The snow lay deep, and the hard crust glistened like silver. All at once she heard little sighs of grief outside her door. When she opened it there sat Peter and Jimmy Rice, two very poor little boys, with their faces in their hands; and they were crying.

"My patience!" cried grandma. "What can be the matter with two bright little boys this sunny morning?"

"We don't have no good times," sighed little Peter.

"We can't slide. We haven't any sleds," whimpered Jimmy.

"Why, of course boys can't have a good time without sleds," said grandma, cheerily. "Let us look about and see if we can't find something." And grandma's cap-border bobbed behind barrels and boxes in the shed and all among the cobwebs in the garret; but nothing could be found suitable.

"Hum! I do believe this would do for little Pete;" and the dear old lady drew a large, pressed-tin pan off the top shelf in the pantry. A long, smooth butter-tray was found for Jimmy. Grandma shook her cap-border with laughter to see them skim over the hard crust

in their queer sleds. And the boys shouted and swung their hands as they flew past the window.

"I do expect they'll wear 'em about through," murmured grandma; "but boys must slide,— that's certain."

And the pan was scoured as bright as a new silver dollar and the red paint was all gone off the wooden tray when Peter and Jimmy brought their sleds back.

Grandma knitted faster than ever all that day, and her face was

bright with smiles. She was planning something. She went to see Job Easter that night. He promised to make two small sleds for the pair of socks she was knitting.

When the sleds were finished she dyed them red and drew a yellow horse upon each one. Grandma called them horses, but no one would have suspected it. Then the night before Christmas she drew on her great socks over her shoes to keep her from slipping, put on her hood and cloak, and dragged the little sleds over to Peter and Jimmy's house.

She hitched them to the door-latch, and went home laughing all the way.

SANTA CLAUS'S LETTER.

CHRISTMAS was coming. Jamie and Ted had already begun to write long letters to Santa Claus. But one thing was rather queer: both boys asked him for the same things.

Each little letter ended with, — "Just like brother's."

They agreed to ask for only one sled. They would rather ride together. Now, was not this very sweet and loving?

One night, after they had gone to bed, Jamie said, "Ted, if Santa Claus brings us skates, Jim can teach us how to use them."

"Oh, yes; and if we get fur mittens, it will be such fun to make a fort."

"And a snow-man," Jamie answered.

Ted went on: "I'll always ride the sled down a hill, and you can ride it up."

"I guess you won't," Jamie said, speaking loudly.

"Why not?" Ted asked.

"Because it 'll be as much my sled as yours."

"Yes, 'course," Ted replied; "but I chose it first."

"You are a selfish boy!" said Jamie.

"Well, then, so are you!"

"I don't care. I won't sleep with you. I'll ask mamma if I can't have the first pick; I'm the biggest," roared Jamie, bounding out of bed.

"You're a big, crosscry-baby!" Ted shouted, jumping out after his brother.

Away ran Jamie to mamma, with Ted at his heels. Both were angry. Both talked at once.

Mamma was grieved. Her dear little boys had never been so unkind to each other before. She kissed their hot faces and stroked their pretty hair. She told them how their naughty words hurt her. She showed them how displeased God was to see two little brothers quarrel.

That night they went to sleep in each other's arms, full of love and forgiveness.

Christmas morning came at last. Very early the boys crept out of bed just to "feel" their stockings.

Papa heard them, and, remembering that he was once a boy, lighted the gas.

Each little red stocking was full from toe to top. Boxes and

paper parcels were piled around them. Such shouting! Such a good time! It seemed as if all their letters had been answered.

Suddenly Jamie cried, "Oh, Ted, here's a letter!"

They put their little heads together, and with papa's help spelled this out:

"MY DEAR BOYS, — No sled this year. It quarrelled so, I was afraid to bring it. I dropped it off the load about a week ago. Get ready for it next year. Merry Christmas!

"SANTA CLAUS."

C. EMMA CHENEY.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

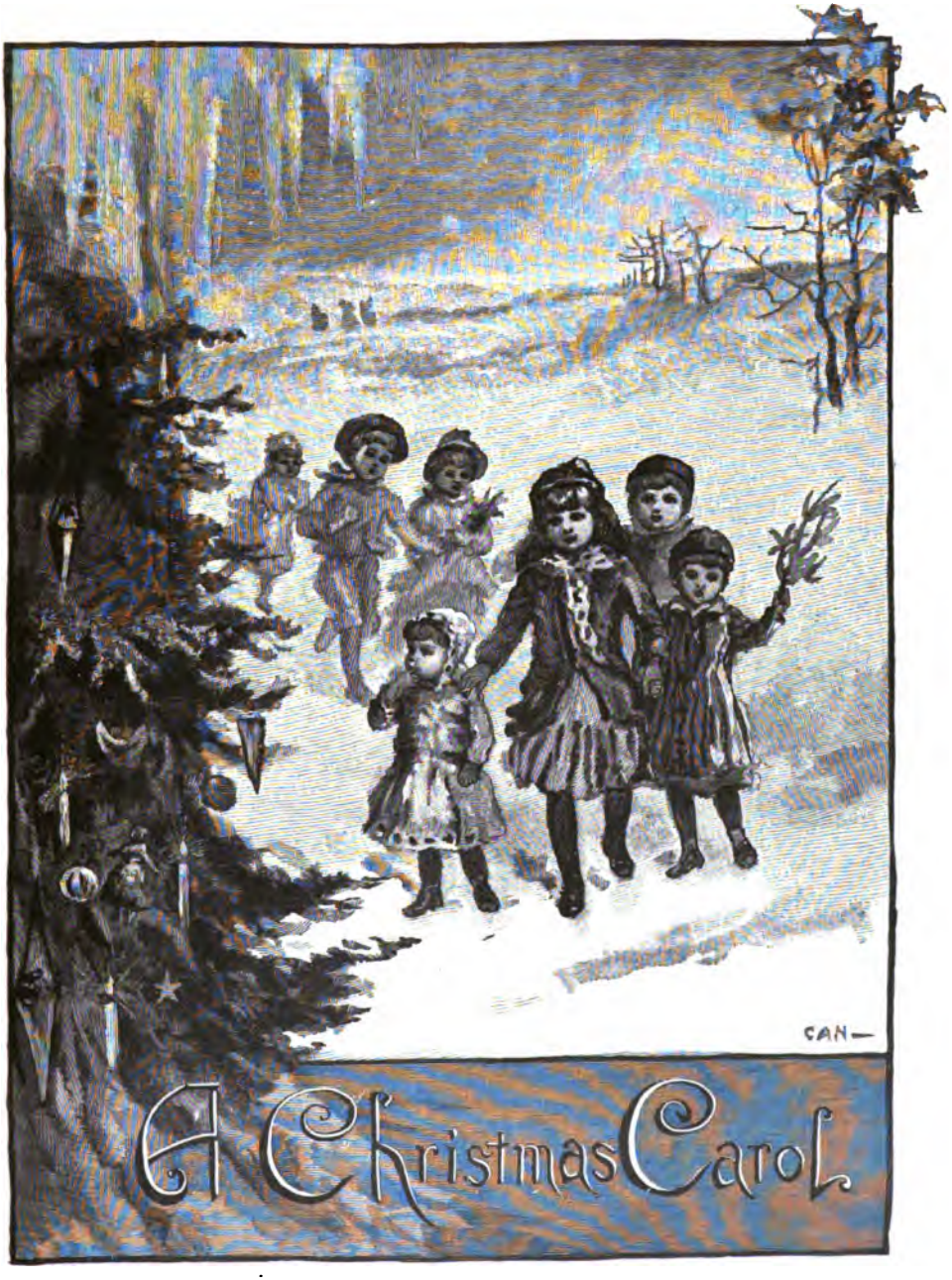
WE'RE little lads and lassies gay,
Pray to our song give ear;
We've come a long and snowy way
To sing of Christmas cheer.

There's no day half so dear and glad,
Alike to young and old;
We pray that no one may be sad,
Or want for lack of gold.

That each may have a merry heart
To greet this merry day,
And pass a happy greeting on
To all who come their way.

For Christmas is no time for woe,
'Tis a day for joy and cheer;
It comes with wreathing greens and snow
To round the happy year.

L. A. FRANCE.


CAN—
A Christmas Carol

A CHRISTMAS PROBLEM.

"WHAT do you think my grandmother said,
Telling Christmas stories to me
To-night, when I went and coaxed and coaxed,
Laying my head upon her knee?

"She thinks (she really told me so)
That good Saint Nicholas, long ago,
Was old and gray
As he is to-day, —
Going around with his loaded sleigh,

Wrapped about with his robe of fur;
With lots of frolic, and fun, and stir,
A cheery whoop and a merry call,—
And never a jolly boy at all!

"She thinks he's driven through frost and snows,
As every Christmas comes and goes,
With jingling bells and a bag of toys,
Ho, ho! for good little girls and boys,
With a carol gay
And a Clear the way!
For a rollicking, merry Christmas-day,—
With just exactly the same reindeers
Prancing on, for a thousand years!

"Grandmother knows 'most everything,—
All that I ask her she can tell;
Rivers and towns in geography,
And the hardest words she can always spell.
But the wisest ones, sometimes they say,
Mistake, and even grandmother may!

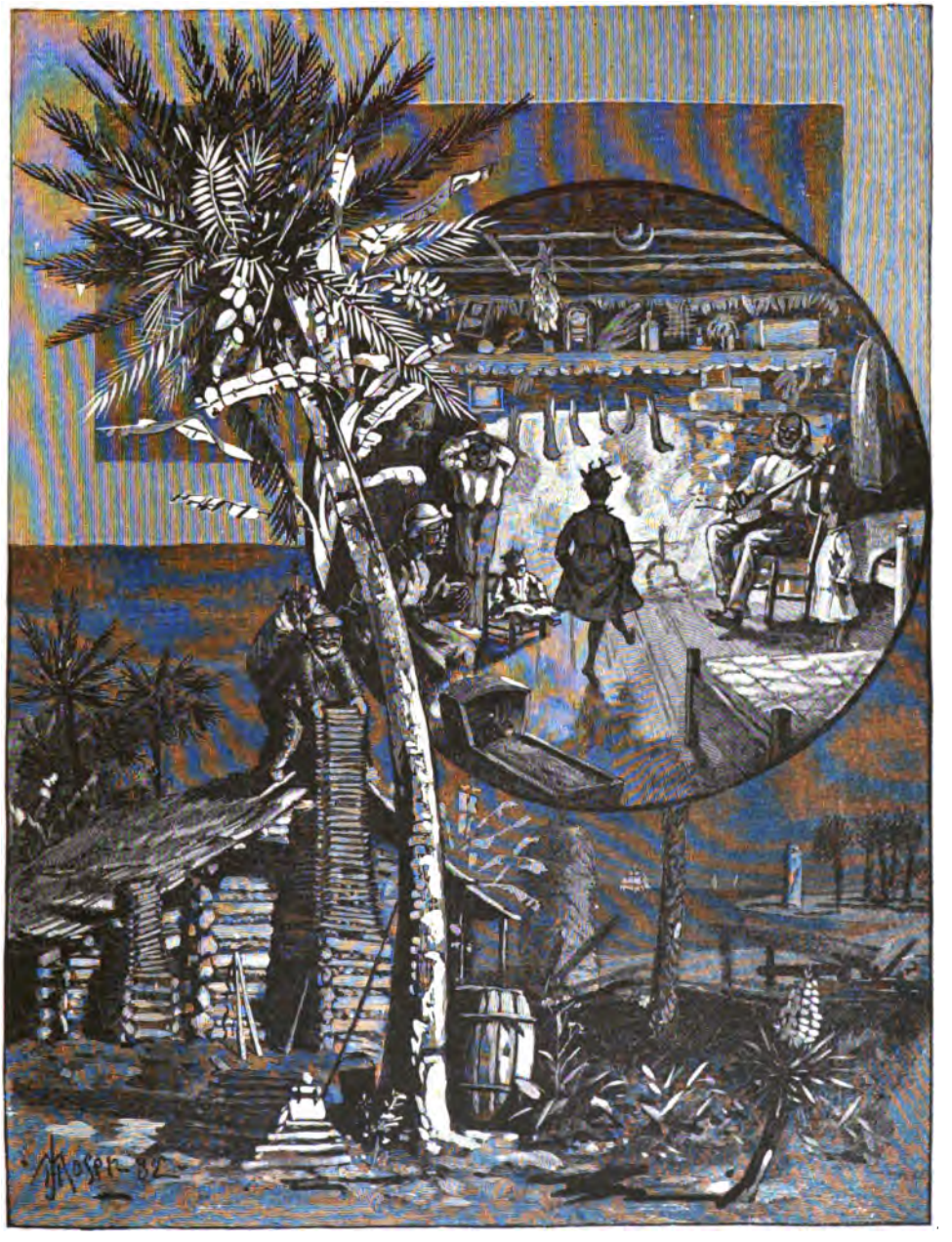
"If Santa Claus never had been a boy
How would he always know so well
What all the boys are longing for
On Christmas-day,—can grandmother tell?

"Why does he take the shiny rings,
And baby-houses, and dolls with curls,
And dainty lockets, and necklaces,
Never to boys, but all to girls?

"Why does he take the skates and sleds,
The bats and balls, and arrows and bows,
And trumpets, and drums, and guns —hurrah!
To all the boys, —does grandmother know?

"But there is a thing that puzzles me, —
When Santa Claus was a boy at play,
And hung a stocking on Christmas-eve,
Who *could* have filled it for Christmas-day?"

SYDNEY DAYRE.

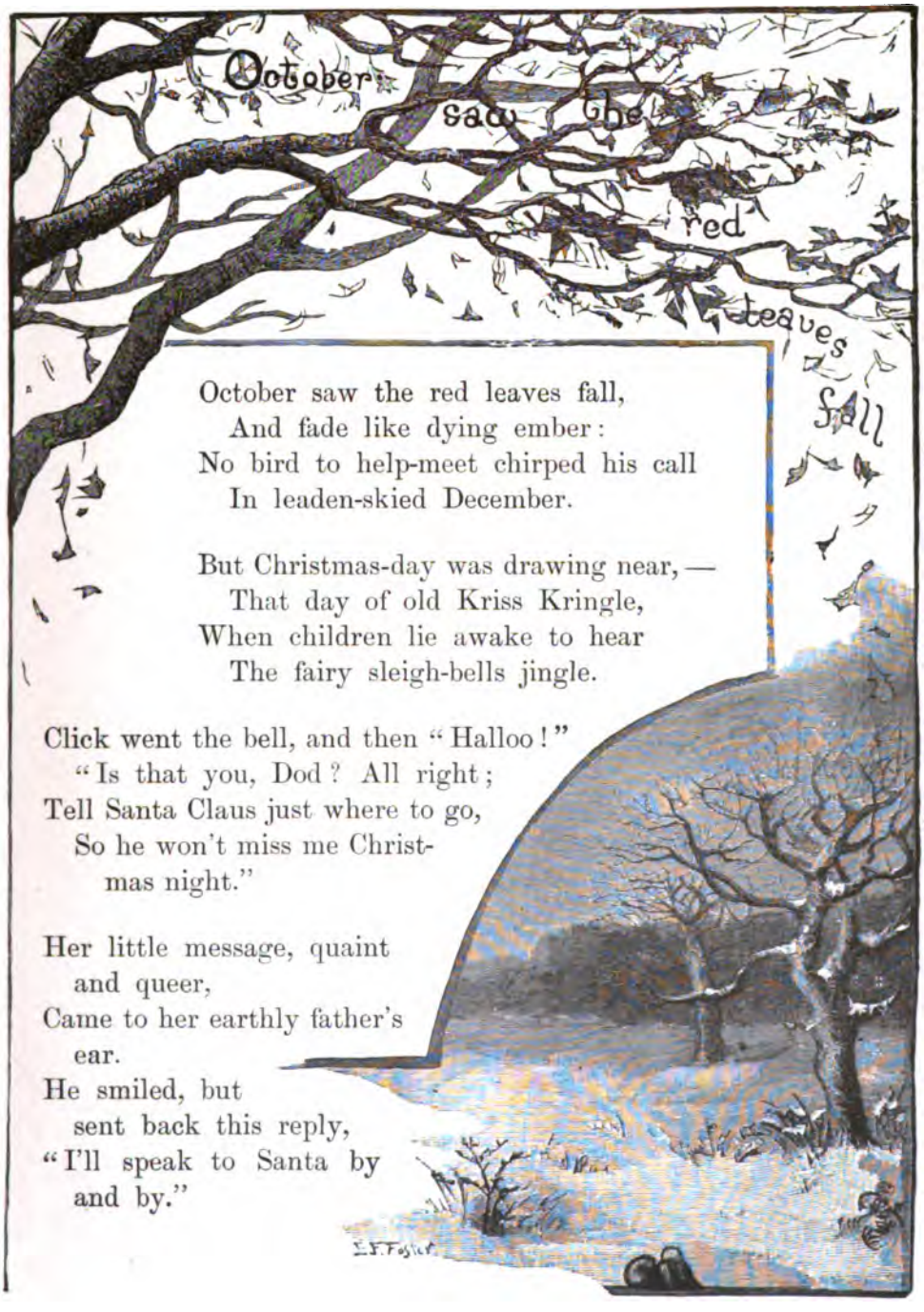


SANTA CLAUS AT THE SOUTH.

CLICK went the bell, and then "Halloo!"
A moment's waiting for reply,
A quick exchange of "Yes" and "No,"
And then,—"All right; good-by."

The telephone was in the hall;
A child looked on and heard the call.

Her father spoke, and every word,
By one unseen, was plainly heard.



October saw the red leaves fall,
And fade like dying ember:
No bird to help-meet chirped his call
In leaden-skied December.

But Christmas-day was drawing near,—
That day of old Kriss Kringle,
When children lie awake to hear
The fairy sleigh-bells jingle.

Click went the bell, and then "Halloo!"
"Is that you, Dod? All right;
Tell Santa Claus just where to go,
So he won't miss me Christ-
mas night."

Her little message, quaint
and queer,
Came to her earthly father's
ear.
He smiled, but
sent back this reply,
"I'll speak to Santa by
and by."

And now dear Christmas-day is here;
  Don't fail to come, Kriss Kringle,
For sleepy children wake to hear
  Your tiny sleigh-bells jingle.

A winsome sprite, in bed-gown white,
  A darling little daughter,
Crept out of bed before daylight,
  To see what Santa brought her.

He had not missed the house at all;
  Her stocking — soon she found it,
And it was full, but oh! so small,
  And gifts were piled all round it.

The telephone is in the hall,
And, after breakfast, there's a call.

A little girl cried out "Halloo!"
  "Thanks, Dod; my presents came all right;
You told good Santa where to go,
  And he was in my room last night.

"I wish you 'merry Christmas' too,
For that's just all that I can do."

EGBERT L. BANGS.